

## Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MTN GENEVA 10068

PASS STR AND AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ETRD, MTN, AS  
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN STATEMENT AT MEETING OF GROUP AGRICULTURE,  
DECEMBER 20, 1976

REF: MTN GENEVA 10051

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT (MENTIONED REFTEL) MADE BY  
AUSTRALIAN DELEGATE TO SUBJECT MEETING.

BEGIN TEXT:  
AUSTRALIAN STATEMENT TO AGRICULTURE GROUP  
20 DECEMBER 1976

1. THIS STATEMENT SEEKS TO  
- EMPHASIZE THE SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADE IN  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO COUNTRIES SUCH AS AUSTRALIA  
WHICH ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON PRODUCTION AND TRADE  
IN PRIMARIES  
- RESTATE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES FACED BY  
PRODUCERS OF FARM PRODUCTS  
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- INTRODUCE A LIST OF AUSTRALIA'S INTERESTS IN VARIOUS  
BARRIERS WHICH IMPEDE OR DISTORT AGRICULTURAL TRADE  
- PROPOSE A PROCEDURE AND PROGRAMME WHICH THE AGRICULTURE  
GROUP AND ITS SUB-GROUP MIGHT PURSUE IN THE COMING MONTHS,  
IN AN EFFORT TO FIND SOLUTIONS.

2. ALTHOUGH THREE YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN TOKYO, VERY LITTLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN FORMULATING A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE APPROACH TO THE NEOGITATIONS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, EVEN THOUGH AGRICULTURE PLAYS A VERY SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE. LAST YEAR EXPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WERE VALUED AT SOME \$US150 BILLION REPRESENTING SOME 20 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VALUE OF EXPORTS OF ALL PRODUCTS.

3. THERE SHOULD BE NO NEED TO UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE EFFICIENT PRODUCERS ATTACH TO TRADE LIBERALIZATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE FAILURE TO SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES.

4. WE ARE ALL ONLY TOO WELL AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR HAS TO A LARGE EXTENT REMAINED COMPARATIVELY UNTOUCHED BY PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE MORE LIBERAL TRADE CONDITIONS. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIND AN AREA OF TRADE WITH SUCH A COMPLEX ARRAY OF DISTORTIONS AND BARRIRS - OR ONE WHERE POLICIES AND PRACTICIES HAVE BEEN AS INCONSISTENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE GATT - AS THAT OF TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. MANY COUNTRIES HAVE INTRODUCED AND MAINTAINED, INCONSISTENTLY WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE GATT, A VARIETY OF IMPORT AND EXPORT MEASURES WHICH HAVE DISTORTED AND RESTRICTED INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DISCOURAGED A MORE RATIONAL USE OF THE WORLD'S FOOD-PRODUCING RESOURCES.

5. THOUGH THE GENERAL AGREEMENT WAS DESIGNED TO REGULATE  
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TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, AS WELL AS OTHER PRODUCTS, IT HAS PROVED INEFFECTIVE IN THIS RESPECT. THE RULES THAT DO EXIST HAVE TO A LARGE EXTENT EITHER BEEN WAIVED, CIRCUMVENTED OR SIMPLY IGNORED.

6. IN THIS INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT WORLD ECONOMY WE SHOULD DO OUR UTMOST TO AVOID TRADE POLICIES WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE AS THEIR MAIN AIM THE ELIMINATION OF EFFECTIVE COMPETITION BETWEEN DOMESTIC PRODUCERS AND FOREIGN SUPPLIERS. PRESENT POLICIES AND PRACTICIES ARE IMPOSING HEAVY COSTS NOT ONLY ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS BUT ALSO ON CONSUMERS AND ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY AS A WHOLE. PROGRESS IN LIBERALISING AND EXPANDING TRADE HOLDS OUT THE POSSIBILITY FOR CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE TO BOTH INDUSTRIALISED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND TO BOTH PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS.

7. THE TOKYO DELCARATION RECOGNIZES THAT DIFFERENT SECTORS OF TRADE HAVE DIFFERING RELATIVE IMPORTANCE TO

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND TO THIS END THE "MUTUAL ADVANTAGE AND RECIPROCITY" CLAUSE SEEKS TO ENSURE AN OVERALL RESULT IN WHICH THERE IS A BROAD EQUIVALENCE IN CONCESSIONS GIVEN AND BENEFITS RECEIVED.

8. IN THIS CONTEXT THE NEED TO ACHIEVE SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS IN IMPROVING WORLD TRADING CONDITIONS FOR PRIMARY PRODUCTS AND PARTICULARLY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT FOR SOME PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES THAN OTHERS. SUCH IS THE CASE FOR AUSTRALIA, OVER 75 PERCENT OF OUR TOTAL EXPORTS ARE PRIMARY COMMODITIES AND 50 PERCENT OF THOSE EXPORTS ARE SPECIFICALLY FARM PRODUCTS - A SITUATION RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AS THE FOLLOWING FIGURES SHOW.

FARM EXPORTS AS AN APPROX. AVERAGE PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPORTS#

JAPAN - 1.4 PERCENT  
NORDIC COUNTRIES - 3.9 PERCENT  
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AND NORWAY)  
EEC (9) -12.0 PERCENT  
USA -19.4 PERCENT  
AUSTRALIA -51.8 PERCENT

# AVERAGE 1969/73. SOURCE: FAO TRADE YEAR BOOK; VOL. 28

9. FOR MAJOR DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE LARGE, TECHNICALLY ADVANCED AND COMPETITIVE INDUSTRIAL SECTORS AND EVEN FOR SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE SUBSTANTIAL INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY AND SCOPE FOR IMMINENT EXPANSION IT IS POSSIBLE TO DERIVE VERY SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FROM THE MTN SOLELY THROUGH LIBERALIZATION OF TRADE IN MANUFACTURES. THIS IS MUCH LESS SO IN AUSTRALIA'S CASE. LESS THAN 20 PERCENT OF AUSTRALIA'S TOTAL EXPORTS COULD BE CONSIDERED MANUFACTURES, AND THE BULK OF THESE GO TO NEARBY MARKETS MANY OF WHICH ARE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHO UNDERSTANDABLY SEEK NOT SO MUCH TO GIVE CONCESSIONS ON TRADE IN MANUFACTURES AS TO RECEIVE THEM. CONVERSELY EXPORTS OF MANUFACTURES TO THE MAJOR INDUSTRIALISED MARKETS OF THE USA, EEC AND JAPAN REPRESENT ONLY 5.5 PERCENT OF AUSTRALIA'S TOTAL EXPORTS.

10. IT IS IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURE THAT AUSTRALIA HAS A COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OVER MANY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AS WELL AS BEING A MAJOR SUPPLIER TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF TEMPERATE FOODSTUFFS WHICH COMPLEMENT THEIR OWN RESOURCES. IT IS IN THIS SECTOR WHERE AUSTRALIA EXPECTS TO ACHIEVE IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS.

11. AUSTRALIA HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF EFFICIENT

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES GEARED TO TRADE AND THE WORLD MARKET;  
AND A VERY HIGH PROPORTION OF TOTAL PRODUCTION IS DESTINED FOR  
EXPORT:

PERCENTAGE (BY VOLUME) OF AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTION  
OF IMPORTANT FARM PRODUCTS EXPORTED

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AVERAGE 1971 - 74

PRODUCT	PERCENT OF PRODUCTION EXPORTED
WOOL	96 PERCENT
SUGAR	76 PERCENT
WHEAT	70 PERCENT
BEEF & VEAL	64 PERCENT
DRIED VINE FRUITS	70 PERCENT
CHEESE	26 PERCENT
BARLEY	53 PERCENT
BUTTER	31 PERCENT

12. THESE EFFICIENT AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES HAVE FACED  
INCREASING RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR ACCESS TO WORLD MARKETS AS  
HIGHER COST PRODUCING COUNTRIES HAVE APPLIED A RANGE OF MEASURES  
TO PROTECT AND STIMULATE THEIR OWN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THESE  
PROTECTIONIST POLICIES HAVE NOT ONLY DISPLACED IMPORTS IN THE  
COUNTRIES APPLYING THEM BUT HAVE ALSO, IN MANY CASES, RESULTED IN  
SURPLUS PRODUCTION THE DISPOSAL OF WHICH HAS DISRUPTED THIRD  
COUNTRY MARKETS, AS A CONSEQUENCE, IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY FOR  
SEVERAL AGRICULTURAL SECTORS IN AUSTRALIA TO CURTAIL PRODUCTION  
AND FOR PEOPLE, LAND AND CAPITAL TO LEAVE THE INDUSTRY DESPITE THE  
FACT THAT IF THE LIBERALIZATION OF WORLD AGRICULTURAL TRADE AP-  
PROACHED THE LEVEL ACHIEVED FOR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS, AUSTRALIA  
WOULD HAVE A CLEAR COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE ARE OF PRODUCTION.

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13. IN DISCUSSIONS TO DATE AUSTRALIA HAS EMPHASISED THESE POINTS AND HAS MADE WHAT IT CONSIDERED TO BE USEFUL SUGGESTIONS TO ADVANCE MEANINGFUL EXCHANGES ON AGRICULTURAL ISSUES IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF PROPOSALS ON ITEM RELATED NTMS, QRS, SUBSIDIES AND VARIABLE LEVIES, WITHOUT HAVING ACHIEVED ANY WORTHWHILE DISCUSSION, DUE TO PROCEDURAL DISPUTES AND THE REFUSAL OF MANY COUNTRIES TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES OTHER THAN IN GROUP AGRICULTURE.

14. AUSTRALIA ACKNOWLEDGES THAT PROGRESS IN LIBERALIZING INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AS WITH OTHER PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE A SIMPLE TASK. HOWEVER, IF 1977 IS TO REMAIN THE TARGET DATE FOR CONCLUDING THE NEGOTIATIONS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE ALL ADOPT A MORE FLEXIBLE AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH SO THAT SUBSTANTIVE EXAMINATION OF TRADE BARRIERS IS PUT UNDERWAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

15. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT AUSTRALIA RESERVED ITS POSITION IN RESPECT OF PROPOSALS ON HOW TO PROCEED WITH WORK ON AGRICULTURE, CONTAINED IN DOCUMENT MTN/AG/4 WHICH MOST PARTICIPANTS ENDORSED AT THE DECEMBER 1975 MEETING OF THE TNC.  
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AUSTRALIA, HAS CONSISTENTLY EMPHASISED THAT THE MULTILATERAL CHARACTER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD APPLY TO BOTH AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL TRADE.

16. THE OVERALL POSITION IS THAT LITTLE HEADWAY HAS BEEN MADE, AND THIS LACK OF PROGRESS IS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION, OF THE MTN AS A WHOLE, OR OF AUSTRALIA.

17. IN EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR AN ACCESS-TO-THE-BOARD, MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO SOLUTIONS ON AGRICULTURAL TRADE AUSTRALIA HAS TAKEN PARTICULAR NOTE OF THE REPEATED INSISTENCE BY SOME DELEGATIONS, AND ESPECIALLY THE EEC, THAT THEY WOULD DISCUSS PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE ONLY IN THE AGRICULTURE GROUP AND ITS SUB-GROUPS.

18. WE THINK THAT WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE ONGOING DISCUSSIONS

IN OTHER GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS, FULL OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE GIVEN FOR IT TO BE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE AGRICULTURE GROUP AND ITS SUB-GROUPS CAN PROCEED TO UNDERTAKE MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS SHOWING THE WAY TO NEGOTIATIONS ON ISSUES SUCH AS ACCESS, DOMESTIC SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND EXPORT SUBSIDY PRACTICES. AUSTRALIA IS NOT AT ALL CONVINCED THAT A BILATERAL APPROACH IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WILL LEAD TO THE BEST RESULTS IN TERMS OF RECIPROCITY AND MUTUAL ADVANTAGE AT THE BROADEST POSSIBLE LEVEL. NEVERTHELESS WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS ARE DETERMINED ON THIS INTERIM APPROACH. THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO GIVE THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR GOOD FAITH IN THE MATTER. ACCORDINGLY, AUSTRALIA WILL TODAY BE SUBMITTING FOR CIRCULATION AN INDICATIVE LIST OF AUSTRALIA'S INTEREST IN VARIOUS BARRIERS WHICH IMPEDE OR DISTORT AGRICULTURAL TRADE. THIS LIST IS NOT INTENDED TO BE EXHAUSTIVE AND DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT ANY ORDER OF PRIORITY. HOWEVER, AUSTRALIA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO NOTIFY OTHER MEASURES AS IT DEEMS APPROPRIATE. RELEVANT PARTS OF THIS LIST WILL BE USED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN MTN/AG/4. WHILST WE RECOGNISE THAT SUCH CONSUL-

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TATIONS MAY PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN CLARIFYING THE FACTUAL SITUATION AND IN HELPING TO UNDERSTAND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES UNDERLYING PARTICULAR MEASURES THEY ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR AND SHOULD NOT DELAY THE MULTILATERAL SEARCH FOR IMPROVED CONDITIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

19. IN AUSTRALIA'S VIEW IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE MULTILATERAL DISCUSSION OF AGRICULTURAL ISSUES COMMENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IN OUR VIEW GROUP AGRICULTURE SHOULD PROCEED WITH ITS WORK PROGRAMME DIVIDED INTO TWO INTER-RELATED AREAS:

(A) A DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF TRADE WHICH SHOULD BE ADOPTED FOR AGRICULTURE. I WILL GIVE EXAMPLES LATER. THIS WORK SHOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF AND BE CO-ORDINATED WITH OTHER GROUPS WORKING ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES WITH THEN AIM OF IDENTIFYING THE COMMON GROUND FOR CODES OF GENERAL APPLICATION AS WELL AS CODES PARTICULARLY RELATED TO AGRICULTURE.

(B) THE WORK OF THE MAJOR SUB-GROUPS COULD PROCEED TO TRANSLATE THESE GENERAL PRINCIPLES INTO FORMS SUITABLE FOR THE PARTICULAR COMMODITIES UNDER EXAMINATION. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE WORK OF MEAT, DAIRY AND GRAINS GROUPS SHOULD BE SUSPENDED. IN FACT, FROM THESE GROUPS WOULD COME THE ESSENTIAL INPUTS FOR THE GROUPS CONSIDERING THE BROADER ELEMENTS IN (A).

20. WITH REGARD TO WHAT I HAVE SAID AUSTRALIA BELIEVES

THAT THE ISSUES WHICH WE THINK SHOULD BE TAKEN UP UNDER (A)  
SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

(I) ACCESS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS INCLUDING  
- THE SCOPE FOR REDUCTIONS IN TARIFF BARRIERS IN  
TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE  
TARIFF FORMULA BEING PROPOSED IN THE TARIFF GROUP  
- THE SCOPE AND METHODS FOR NEGOTIATING ON NON-  
TARIFF MEASURES, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF HOW  
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REDUCTIONS IN BARRIERS TO AGRICULTURAL TRADE  
EQUIVALENT TO THOSE BEING PROPOSED FOR TRADE IN  
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS CAN BE ACHIEVED

(II) PRICE SUPPORT POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND TRADE  
- METHODS OF CONTAINING THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF  
PRICE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ON PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION AND TRADE

(III) EXPORT AIDS, THEIR IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL TRADE  
AND METHODS OF NEGOTIATING CONSTRAINTS ON DUMPING OF  
SUBSIDISED EXPORTS.

21. AUSTRALIA HOPES THAT THE ABOVE PROPOSAL WILL ASSIST  
ACCELERATED PROGRESS IN THIS AREA OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND ON THIS  
BASIS LOOKS FORWARD TO PARTICIPATING IN THE WORK OF GROUP  
AGRICULTURE IN 1977. AT THE END OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IT IS OUR  
HOPE THAT ONE OF THE MEMORABLE ACHIEVEMENTS WILL BE A REAL  
MOVEMENT TOWARDS A MORE LIBERAL WORLD REGIME IN AGRICULTURE.  
MUCH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES IN THE LIBERAL-  
IZATION OF WORLD TRADE IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS. HOWEVER, THE  
PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE HAVE DEFIED SOLUTIONS AT SUCCESSIVE  
ROUNDS OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT THIS ROUND  
OF NEGOTIATIONS WILL ACHIEVE THE EQUIVALENCE OF TREATMENT IN THE  
GATT FOR ALL PRODUCTS, AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL, SO THAT ALL  
NATIONS WILL BENEFIT TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT IN THE LIBERALIZATION  
OF WORLD TRADE. END TEXT WALKER

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